

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 90

Adopted in Assembly May 15, 2003

Chief Clerk of the Assembly

Adopted in Senate May 29, 2003

Secretary of the Senate

This resolution was received by the Secretary of
State this _____ day of _____, 2003,
at _____ o'clock ____M.

Deputy Secretary of State

└

RESOLUTION CHAPTER _____

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 90—Relative to Asian and Pacific Islander Mental Health Awareness Month.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 90, Chan. Asian and Pacific Islander Mental Health Awareness Month.

This measure would proclaim May 2003 as Asian and Pacific Islander Mental Health Awareness Month, and would urge Californians to join forces with mental health advocates, mental health care workers, and leaders in the Asian American community to raise awareness of mental health concerns in the Asian American community and in the State of California.

WHEREAS, Asian American women have the highest suicide rate among women over 65 years of age, and the second highest suicide rate among women 15 to 24 years of age, in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Eighty-nine percent of the Asian American women who have committed suicide were immigrants, and Chinese American women have the highest suicide death rate of all racial and ethnic groups, with 20 suicide deaths per 100,000 population; and

WHEREAS, Southeast Asian Americans, including Amerasians, from war-torn countries suffer debilitating posttraumatic stress and severe depression that remain unrecognized and untreated; and

WHEREAS, Suicides among Hmong teens in Fresno account for nearly one-half of the suicides in that area in recent years even though Hmong residents comprise only 3 percent of the region's population; and

WHEREAS, Asian American adolescent girls have the highest rates of depressive symptoms of all racial and gender groups; and

WHEREAS, Mental health issues are not widely understood in the Asian American community, and the interpretation of Western-based diagnoses and symptom labels are not easily translated without negative connotations. Thus, many Asian Americans tend to deny the existence of "depression" or



“anxiety,” although they readily acknowledge “headaches,” “stomach problems,” “lack of pleasure,” and “sleep problems,” all of which are key indicators of depression or anxiety disorders; and

WHEREAS, As an example of these translation problems, in Hmong, there are no words for “I feel” and “suicide”; and

WHEREAS, The social stigma of mental illness that exists within the Asian American community, and the model minority myth that is generated by society at large, compound the problems of access to mental health care for Asian Americans, resulting in disproportionately low utilization of mental health services by members of the Asian American community relative to other populations in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Additionally, nearly one out of two Asian Americans will have difficulty accessing mental health treatment because they do not speak English or cannot find services that meet their linguistic needs; and

WHEREAS, Among Asian Americans who actually use mental health services, the severity of mental illness is more likely to be high, due to delay in seeking treatment until symptoms reach crisis proportions; and

WHEREAS, More research is needed to examine the magnitude of mental illnesses and quality of services for Asian Americans and their subethnic groups; and

WHEREAS, The California Legislature has proclaimed the month of May to be both “Asian Pacific Islander Heritage Month” and “Mental Health Awareness Month” in recognition of the myriad contributions of Asian Americans in the state and, separately, the tremendous need for mental health awareness in California; and

WHEREAS, Recent data on the alarming suicide rates among Asian Americans and new census data on the exponential growth of the Asian American population in California warrant a more concerted effort to raise awareness of mental illnesses and mental health issues in the Asian American community; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature proclaims the month of May 2003 as Asian and Pacific Islander Mental Health Awareness Month, and urges Californians to join forces with mental health



advocates, mental health care workers, and leaders in the Asian American community to raise awareness of mental health concerns in the Asian American community and in the State of California; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.



Attest:

Secretary of State

